**Peace and Conflict Studies**

### A: research question

(Objectives 1 and 2)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the purpose of the essay is specified. In many subjects, the aim of the essay will normally be expressed as a question and, therefore, this criterion is called the “research question”. However, certain disciplines may permit or encourage different ways of formulating the research task.

**Although the aim of the essay can best be defined in the form of a question, it may also be presented as a statement or proposition for discussion. It must be appropriate to the subject in which the essay is submitted. In peace and conflict studies, this provides students with a wide range of topics. Even if the research question is built into the title itself in the form of a question, it must also be clearly stated in the early part of the essay and in the abstract.**

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| **Achievement level** | **Descriptor** |
| 0 | The research question is not stated in either the introduction or on the title page **or** does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in an extended essay in the subject in which it is registered. |
| 1 | The research question is stated in either the introduction or on the title page but is not clearly expressed **or** is too broad in scope to be treated effectively within the word limit. |
| 2 | The research question is clearly stated in either the introduction or on the title page and is sharply focused, making effective treatment possible within the word limit. |

### B: introduction

(Objectives 1 and 5)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the introduction makes clear how the research question relates to existing knowledge on the topic and explains how the topic chosen is significant and worthy of investigation.

**Students should explain briefly the importance and the context of the topic, and, perhaps, the reason for choosing it. The introduction should relate the research question to existing subject knowledge: the student’s personal experience or particular opinion is rarely relevant here.**

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| **Achievement level** | **Descriptor** |
| 0 | Little or no attempt is made to set the research question into context. There is little or no attempt to explain the significance of the topic. |
| 1 | Some attempt is made to set the research question into context. There is some attempt to explain the significance of the topic and why it is worthy of investigation. |
| 2 | The context of the research question is clearly demonstrated. The introduction clearly explains the significance of the topic and why it is worthy of investigation. |

### C: investigation

(Objectives 1 and 3)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the investigation is planned and an appropriate range of sources has been consulted, or data has been gathered, that is relevant to the research question. Where the research question does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject in which the essay is registered, the maximum level that can be awarded for this criterion is 2.

**Students should demonstrate that they have selected a range of sources on the basis of their relevance to the topic and the research question. They should also show that the investigation into sources and data has been planned and carefully selected.**

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| **Achievement level** | **Descriptor** |
| 0 | There is little or no evidence that sources have been consulted or data gathered, and little or no evidence of planning in the investigation. |
| 1 | A range of inappropriate sources has been consulted, or inappropriate data has been gathered, and there is little evidence that the investigation has been planned. |
| 2 | A limited range of appropriate sources has been consulted, or data has been gathered, and some relevant material has been selected. There is evidence of some planning in the investigation. |
| 3 | A sufficient range of appropriate sources has been consulted, or data has been gathered, and relevant material has been selected. The investigation has been satisfactorily planned. |
| 4 | An imaginative range of appropriate sources has been consulted, or data has been gathered, and relevant material has been carefully selected. The investigation has been well planned. |

### D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

(Objectives 3 and 7)

Where the research question does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject in which the essay is registered, the maximum level that can be awarded for this criterion is 2. “Academic context”, as used in this guide, can be defined as the current state of the field of study under investigation. However, this is to be understood in relation to what can reasonably be expected of a pre-university student. For example, to obtain a level 4, it would be sufficient to relate the investigation to the principal lines of inquiry in the relevant field; detailed, comprehensive knowledge is not required.

**Students are expected to illustrate their knowledge of the chosen topic by placing it within a context of peace and conflict in society. This knowledge should include an understanding of academic theories about the causes of peace and conflict.**

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| **Achievement level** | **Descriptor** |
| 0 | The essay demonstrates no real knowledge or understanding of the topic studied. |
| 1 | The essay demonstrates some knowledge but little understanding of the topic studied. The essay shows little awareness of an academic context for the investigation. |
| 2 | The essay demonstrates an adequate knowledge and some understanding of the topic studied. The essay shows some awareness of an academic context for the investigation. |
| 3 | The essay demonstrates a good knowledge and understanding of the topic studied. Where appropriate, the essay successfully outlines an academic context for the investigation. |
| 4 | The essay demonstrates a very good knowledge and understanding of the topic studied. Where appropriate, the essay clearly and precisely locates the investigation in an academic context. |

### E: reasoned argument

(Objectives 1 and 4)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the essay uses the material collected to present ideas in a logical and coherent manner, and develops a reasoned argument in relation to the research question. Where the research question does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject in which the essay is registered, the maximum level that can be awarded for this criterion is 2.

**This, along with the previous criterion, goes to the heart of the essay. A reasoned argument will be logical, coherent, persuasive, well supported with evidence and always relevant to the research question.**

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| **Achievement level** | **Descriptor** |
| 0 | There is no attempt to develop a reasoned argument in relation to the research question. |
| 1 | There is a limited or superficial attempt to present ideas in a logical and coherent manner, and to develop a reasoned argument in relation to the research question. |
| 2 | There is some attempt to present ideas in a logical and coherent manner, and to develop a reasoned argument in relation to the research question, but this is only partially successful. |
| 3 | Ideas are presented in a logical and coherent manner, and a reasoned argument is developed in relation to the research question, but with some weaknesses. |
| 4 | Ideas are presented clearly and in a logical and coherent manner. The essay succeeds in developing a reasoned and convincing argument in relation to the research question. |

### F: application of analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the subject

(Objective 7)

**Students are expected to apply peace and conflict analysis accurately and consistently, to demonstrate awareness and understanding of the differing roles, interpretations and actions of all conflicting parties, as well as a realistic examination of possible solutions to conflict situations.**

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| **Achievement level** | **Descriptor** |
| 0 | The essay shows no application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills. |
| 1 | The essay shows little application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills. |
| 2 | The essay shows some application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills, which may be only partially effective. |
| 3 | The essay shows sound application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills. |
| 4 | The essay shows effective and sophisticated application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills. |

### G: use of language appropriate to the subject

(Objective 6)

The use of language must be effective and include relevant peace and conflict terminology.

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| **Achievement level** | **Descriptor** |
| 0 | The language used is inaccurate and unclear. There is no effective use of terminology appropriate to the subject. |
| 1 | The language used sometimes communicates clearly but does not do so consistently. The use of terminology appropriate to the subject is only partly accurate. |
| 2 | The language used for the most part communicates clearly. The use of terminology appropriate to the subject is usually accurate. |
| 3 | The language used communicates clearly. The use of terminology appropriate to the subject is accurate, although there may be occasional lapses. |
| 4 | The language used communicates clearly and precisely. Terminology appropriate to the subject is used accurately, with skill and understanding. |

### H: conclusion

(Objectives 1, 4 and 5)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the essay incorporates a conclusion that is relevant to the research question and is consistent with the evidence presented in the essay.

**This should stem from, and be consistent with, the evidence presented in the research. No new material should be introduced apart from identifying new questions that may have arisen from the research.**

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| **Achievement level** | **Descriptor** |
| 0 | Little or no attempt is made to provide a conclusion that is relevant to the research question. |
| 1 | A conclusion is attempted that is relevant to the research question but may not be entirely consistent with the evidence presented in the essay. |
| 2 | An effective conclusion is clearly stated; it is relevant to the research question and consistent with the evidence presented in the essay. It should include unresolved questions where appropriate to the subject concerned. |

### I: formal presentation

(Objective 5)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the layout, organization, appearance and formal elements of the essay consistently follow a standard format. The formal elements are: title page, table of contents, page numbers, illustrative material, quotations, documentation (including references, citations and bibliography) and appendices (if used).

**This criterion relates to the extent to which the essay conforms to academic standards about the way in which research papers should be presented. The presentation of essays that omit a bibliography or that do not give references for quotations is deemed unacceptable (level 0). Essays that omit one of the required elements—title page, table of contents, page numbers—are deemed no better than satisfactory**

**(maximum level 2), while essays that omit two of them are deemed poor at best (maximum level 1). Appendices are not essential and examiners are not required to read them. It is important, therefore, for students to include all content of direct relevance to the argument in the body of the essay.**

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| **Achievement level** | **Descriptor** |
| 0 | The formal presentation is unacceptable, or the essay exceeds 4,000 words. |
| 1 | The formal presentation is poor. |
| 2 | The formal presentation is satisfactory. |
| 3 | The formal presentation is good. |
| 4 | The formal presentation is excellent. |

### J: abstract

(Objective 5)

The requirements for the abstract are for it to state clearly the research question that was investigated, how the investigation was undertaken and the conclusion(s) of the essay.

**The abstract is judged on the clarity with which it presents an overview of the research question, the scope of the investigation and the conclusion, not on the quality of the research question itself, nor on the quality of the argument or the conclusions.**

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| **Achievement level** | **Descriptor** |
| 0 | The abstract exceeds 300 words **or** one or more of the required elements of an abstract (listed above) is missing. |
| 1 | The abstract contains the elements listed above but they are not all clearly stated. |
| 2 | The abstract clearly states all the elements listed above. |

### K: holistic judgment

(Objective 1)

The purpose of this criterion is to assess the qualities that distinguish an essay from the average, such as intellectual initiative, depth of understanding and insight. While these qualities will be clearly present in the best work, less successful essays may also show some evidence of them and should be rewarded under this criterion.

**The qualities that distinguish an essay from the average are rewarded under this criterion. These qualities include intellectual initiative, depth of understanding, insight, creativity and flair. When all these qualities are present, they will identify an essay of outstanding quality. Essays that demonstrate only one or two of them should also be rewarded.**

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| **Achievement level** | **Descriptor** |
| 0 | The essay shows no evidence of such qualities. |
| 1 | The essay shows little evidence of such qualities. |
| 2 | The essay shows some evidence of such qualities. |
| 3 | The essay shows clear evidence of such qualities. |
| 4 | The essay shows considerable evidence of such qualities. |